

# The Mirror

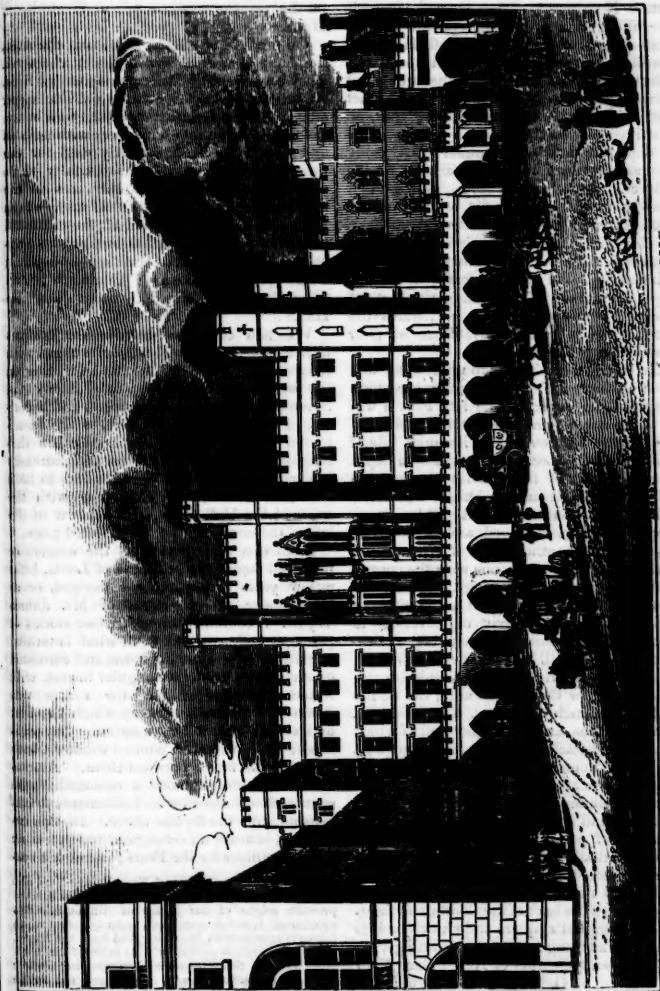
OF

LITERATURE, AMUSEMENT, AND INSTRUCTION.

No. 688.]

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 1834.

[PRICE 2d.]



THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Vol. XXIV.

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## THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.

RESUMING the design commenced in our previous Number, with the early history of St. Stephen's Chapel, it is our present intention only to present the reader with an outline of the recent Conflagration; and, in future Numbers, to follow up and complete the illustration of the antiquities, modern history, and actual state, of both Houses of Parliament, their localities, and associations. The reader is probably aware that we do not usually present the *Mirror* as "the abstract and brief chronicle of the times;" but, in this instance, we feel that we are warranted in departure from our common practice, by the extraordinary interest attached to the subject. Important, however, as the event may be to the chronologist, we are free to confess that its *antiquarian* associations have, in the main, induced us thus to attend to minute details; for, to say the truth, we have comparatively but little sympathy in the disappearance of any of the modern architectural glories of the site, except as regards the pecuniary loss and inconvenience of their destruction to the nation.

To enable every reader to understand and trace, in his mind's eye, the commencement, progress, and extent of the late Fire, it will be necessary to premise a brief outline of the relative position of the irregular pile of buildings, which occupy the space in depth from the bank of the Thames westward to Old Palace Yard; and in length from New Palace Yard southward to Abingdon-street. These buildings clustered around the two sides and the southern end of Westminster Hall, which stands in a line with the current of the Thames; and, although this magnificent Hall is not the nucleus, or centre, of the extensive pile, it may be advisable to start from this point. As you face the entrance to the Hall, beneath the superb north window,—on the right or western side is a succession of Law Courts, including the Courts of King's Bench, Chancery, Vice-Chancery, Common Pleas, and Exchequer; all of which abut or are attached to the stupendous wall, which is immensely thick; and between which Courts and the wall is a long, narrow passage, communicating by four arched doors with the Hall itself. On this side likewise, is a line of pointed windows, by which the Hall is partially lit; and at the south end is a lofty, storied window, corresponding with that at the northern end, already mentioned. Parallel with the back of the Courts, and fronting St. Margaret's square and churchyard, is a substantial range of stone buildings, extending from the corner of New Palace Yard to the corner of Old Palace Yard, which begins at Poet's Corner. These buildings are occupied as retiring rooms for the Judges,

Counsel, and other officers, and private entrances to the Courts. At about two-thirds of its extent, commenced the committee-rooms of the House of Commons, under which, at the extreme corner, fronting Henry the Seventh's Chapel, was an entrance for the Members of the House of Commons. This comprised the whole of the buildings on the right or western side of Westminster Hall.

On the left, or eastern side, next the river, the buildings were of a different character. They commenced with some ancient edifices, we believe, connected with the old Exchequer office; these were attached to the wall of the Hall by two antique chambers with pointed and barred windows, formerly used for the reception of state prisoners. Under these chambers are two arched entrances to the courtyard of the Speaker's House, which faces as you enter; the left of the courtyard being occupied by old brick buildings, appropriated to the Speaker's secretary, and junior clerks of the House of Commons; and the right being formed by the wall of the Hall.\*

We now come to describe the edifices beyond the Hall, in which the fire raged with most destructive fury. The stone building on the west, terminating opposite Henry the Seventh's Chapel, turns an angle, and is continued facing Abingdon-street, to the termination of Westminster Hall. Within this range of building were corridors and staircases leading to the committee-rooms and to both Houses of Parliament; this point, with the gable of the Hall above, being shown in the left of the engraving on the annexed page.

From this angle extended the western or principal façade of the House of Lords, built a few years since, from the designs, or at least under the direction, of Mr. James Wyatt. It contained three and four stories of passages and apartments, in what is termed the Tudor style of architecture, and consisted of quadrangular and octangular towers, with square-headed windows; the centre was flanked with turrets, between which the first and second stories had handsome bay-windows; above were two pointed windows, with an enriched niche between them. Around the basements extended a colonnade, with open arches, finished with battlements to correspond with the façade above. In this colonnade, beneath an octangular tower, was an arched entrance for the Peers; from which ex-

\* Upon the south side of New Palace Yard also is situated the Star-Chamber, celebrated in the oppressive reigns of the Kings of England. This apartment is not denominated from the stars which formerly ornamented its ceiling, but from the *Stars*, or Jewish bonds, deposited in it by order of Richard I. Here sat the Star-Chamber Commissioners, whose arbitrary and severe decrees contributed not a little to bring about those popular discontents whence the civil wars between Charles I. and the Parliament originated.

tended a colonnade similar to the preceding, but filled in with windows, to a handsomer entrance for the King and his train on state occasions. The latter portion was erected by Sir John Soane, subsequently to the other part of the elevation, by Mr. Wyatt; which has been condemned, and not undeservedly, as tame almost beyond endurance, especially in opposite contrast with that beautifully restored specimen of florid paintwork—Henry the Seventh's chapel, "the miracle of the world," as Leland styled it 300 years since, and as it still remains. This extensive range, from the Commons' to the King's Entrance, is shown in our Engraving; and to trace the progress of the Fire, it will be requisite to notice the respective towers and intervening buildings. In this pile, on the ground-floor, next the first square tower, were Howard's Coffee-house, waiting, and coat-rooms; above were the rooms of Mr. Bellamy, the housekeeper, and other apartments. Above the Peers' Entrance was the Lord Chancellor's Room; and a staircase leads from the King's Portico into a saloon, through which His Majesty passed to the robing-room, behind the throne, at the southern extremity of the large apartment, distinctively termed the House of Lords. As this apartment will be hereafter illustrated, we shall here merely observe that it was shut in on the west by the façade we have just described; and on the east by the range of buildings facing the river, and remaining for description. This consisted of a pile of Parliamentary offices, in the Tudor style; the gable of the Painted Chamber, lit with pointed windows, and one of the oldest edifices; adjoining was the House of Commons' Library; next was the residence of Mr. Ley, Clerk of the Commons; then the eastern gable of St. Stephen's Chapel, or the House of Commons, and beyond it the Speaker's Residence; the two latter engraved in our last Number, with part of the Garden, which extends along the whole of the eastern front.

Irregular as was this vast pile of buildings it was, in many respects, sought to be rendered convenient by means of communication too numerous for us to particularize. There were nearly as many levels as buildings; from the low area of Westminster Hall, and the Speaker's dining-room, (or the crypt of St. Stephen's Chapel,) to its ventilator floor, and the topmost tower of the Lords' façade. The Hall and the Lords' colonnade were public thoroughfares: the former, as we have shown, communicated with the Law Courts. Lobbies, long galleries, passages, and staircases, led to the Houses of Lords and Commons, their respective libraries, the residences of the official persons, and depositories of parliamentary papers. The Speaker went in state from his own dwelling by a passage to the House of Commons, and as

we have already mentioned, his dining chair was just beneath his official one: and the Lords and Commons conferred in the Painted Chamber as conveniently as though their "Houses" were beneath the same roof. In short, the Hall, Law Courts, Houses of Lords and Commons, official residences, libraries, offices, with all the luxurious accommodations of coffee-houses and dining places, were, in this mass of buildings, assembled as beneath one vast roof; and it is scarcely possible for the memory to grasp the multiplicity of national business which has been transacted upon this spot, or to enumerate the conveniences which were concentrated here for its dispatch.

The Fire, by which these buildings were wholly consumed, considerably damaged, or scathed, burst forth on the evening of Thursday, October the 16th, from some portion of the western front of the House of Lords. The precise place is much disputed; but, all persons concur, that when the alarm was first given, which was about twenty-five minutes before seven o'clock, a considerable portion of the House of Lords was in a blaze. At seven o'clock, the flames burst through almost every window of the front, and at the same time broke through its roof. The fire was first discovered within by opening a large doorway, through which the Commons went to the bar of the House of Lords; immense volumes of flame then burst forth; and at the same instant they rushed out through the semicircular windows in the body of the House of Lords. A strong south-west wind so greatly aggravated the conflagration, that in less than half an hour it had spread through the entire body of the House, thence through the passages and lobbies leading to the House of Commons, and to the committee-rooms, and Bellamy's Members' dining-rooms above them. The Police Force were quickly on the ground, and engines came rolling in rapid succession, several of which were brought into play in the open space of Palace Yard; but the fire had got such decided hold of the premises, that the exertions of the men were of little or no avail.

"For a length of time," says the *Times*' report, "the exertions of the firemen appeared to be principally directed to save that part of the House of Lords which consisted of the tower that rose above the portico. All the rest of the line of building was enveloped in flames, which had extended themselves along the whole (except the wing) of that part of the adjacent building to the left, that fronts Abingdon-street, and the upper stories of which were committee-rooms, while at the basement were the stone steps leading to the House of Commons. The wing of this building, however, which rose high above the rest, the upper part being a portion of Bellamy's, and the lower being used as a receptacle of

the great coats of the Members of the House of Commons, was, for some time, like the tower above the portico at the entrance to the House of Lords, but slightly injured by the flames; and these two objects seeming to bound the ravages of the fire, and to offer successful resistance to its further progress, while all between them was in one uninterrupted blaze, attracted universal attention. The flames did not, in fact, extend beyond these two points, but seemed to exhaust themselves in the destruction of them. They took fire nearly at the same moment; and, burning furiously for nearly half an hour, the whole structure, from the entrance of the House of Commons to the entrance to the House of Lords, presented one bright sheet of flame. At length, the roofs and ceilings gave way; and when the smoke and sparks that followed the crash of the heavy burning mass that fell, had cleared away, nothing met the eye but an unsightly ruin, tinted with the dark red glare reflected from the smouldering embers at its feet."

While this terrific destruction was proceeding in the House of Lords, the flames extended eastward towards the Commons, in consequence of an opening made at the lower end of the House of Lords for a new gallery. For this purpose had been cut away the wall, which might otherwise have checked the progress of the flames in the Commons direction. Having burnt the further division of the gallery, the flames rushed through the door leading into it, along a staircase and through several offices, chiefly of old wood, and thus conducted the fire to the body of the House of Commons, which being likewise of wood, burnt with such rapidity, that, about eight o'clock the roof fell in, with a tremendous noise, like the firing of guns.

Meanwhile, Westminster Hall had been the scene of conflicting hopes and fears. So early as seven o'clock, considerable alarm was felt for the safety of this magnificent edifice, in consequence of the great body of flames and flakes of fire which were carried over it. From New Palace Yard, the interior of the Hall was a scene of painful interest. The iron railed gate was fast closed; but the inner door was open, and through the great southern window volumes of flame might be seen raging through three windows opposite and immediately near it. There was no one in the Hall: it seemed as it were deserted and abandoned to the approaching fire. It was in vain to think of breaking the iron fence. Some gentlemen persuaded a party of firemen to begin breaking open the small side-door which leads into the Hall: when this was nearly done, a person connected with the building called from within upon the firemen to stop, and by his key saved further labour. To save the Hall now seemed to be the only object to which the attention

of all parties, gentlemen, soldiers, police-men, firemen, and other assistants, could be rationally directed. The iron gate was opened, and two engines were brought into the body of the Hall; the firemen then ascended by ladders to the great window and played upon the flames through dense smoke and a thick shower of sparks; while they were exposed to molten lead, which in one instance, fell upon and destroyed part of a fireman's helmet. By ten o'clock, the fire was so stopped by these exertions, that, although it had consumed all but the beams and walls of the building in which it raged, the flames had only broken the glass of the Hall window.

Although the southern gable was thus preserved, the fire had been making some progress on each side of the Hall, notwithstanding the torrents of water which numerous engines had poured upon the building. To persons within the Hall, at this period, the scene was strikingly impressive. It is true that the massiveness of the walls would have withstood the external fire; more apprehension was felt for the newly-slatted roof; but still more for the interior chestnut roof, celebrated as a fine specimen of the carpentry of the middle ages, and for strength and durability not since excelled. Had the fire once reached this beautiful light and dry timber-work, it must have been rapidly consumed. The flames at each side glared closely and ominously through the upper line of windows, and even flared against some of the large lower windows in the middle line; and, on the eastern side, next the Speaker's house, the fire glowed through the lath and plaster with which the windows had been screened up; while, in one place, where there had been a private door, the wooden framework blazed round an orifice, which, (in the language of a journalist,) seemed like the mouth of one of the potteries. Before the great window, at the same time, there was a deep, dull red, in the midst of which were the ribs of the opposite burnt building, occasionally veiled by thick volumes of smoke, or a fall of burning fragments. The wind had, in the meantime, providentially shifted more to the west, and, with the exception of the flames at the Committee-room corner, turned the fire river-ward and from the Hall. In the Committee-room wing, also, the fire had been stopped by the judicious expedient of cutting away the adjoining roof.

Hitherto, we have not spoken of the Conflagration as viewed from the river, whence it appeared as if nothing could save Westminster Hall from the fury of the flames. An immense pillar of bright, clear fire sprang up behind it, and a cloud of white, yet dazzling smoke whirled above it; through which, as it was parted by the wind, you could occasionally perceive the lantern and enriched pinnacles on each gable. At the

same time, flakes of fire fell upon the vast roof with such rapidity as to render it miraculous that the whole extent did not burst into one unbroken blaze or sheet of fire. From Waterloo Bridge the scene resembled a mighty bonfire, and till you had passed through Westminster Bridge, you could not catch a glimpse of the fire in detail. As soon as you had shot through the Bridge, the whole of the melancholy spectacle was before you. The body of the House of Lords was the central fire of this artificial volcano: the flames raged high on the western side; and on the east, from the Speaker's House to the Parliament offices, the flames were shooting fast and furiously through scores of windows, and flinging a golden yet frightful glare across the river to the palace towers of the opposite shore. The conflagration had done its worst in the Speaker's residence; the House of Commons and Mr. Ley's house were merely roofless shells; and the fire, crackling and rustling in its course, soon devoured the modern tower which contained the House of Commons' library; though, fortunately, the greater number of the books had been removed to another building, and were thus saved. By eleven o'clock, the library tower resembled a huge furnace chimney, lit up with flame from base to summit. The two oriel windows, which fronted the river, appeared to have their framework fringed with lighted jets of gas; and as these disappeared, a clear passage was opened right through the edifice for the raging flames; whilst, foremost in the fearful scene, was, above the upper window, a strong beam of wood burning fiercely from end to end; and the shapes of firemen were indistinctly seen in the lurid light, flitting about in the most perilous situations. The noises throughout the river frontage were indescribably appalling; as the crackling and smashing of windows, the battering down of wooden partitions, and the heavy clatter of falling stones and brickwork, all evidently displaced to check the advance of the flames, which, however, were not stopped until they had reduced the Painted Chamber to a shell. To the thickness of its ancient walls may be attributed the saving of the Parliament Offices beyond it: had the chamber been of modern date, the adjoining building would probably have been consumed.

Soon after midnight, the library tower fell inwards, with a terrific crash; and shortly afterwards, the inward fire, as if it had received fresh fuel in the fragments of timbers, darted up in one startling flame, which was almost at the same instant extinguished in a dense column of the blackest smoke. As soon as this smoke cleared away, the destructive ravages of the fire became more evident. Through a vista of walls flaming with clinging timbers, you beheld the Abbey frowning

in substantial pride over its scorched or ruined neighbours; and blackened walls and wide breaches denoted that in the desolation of six hours had fallen some of the labours of nearly as many centuries!

Such is but a hasty narrative of the recent Conflagration, which in the rapidity and extent of its ravages, may be said to have equalled, if not exceeded, any similar calamity of our times. We need not recapitulate the buildings destroyed or injured, but shall merely repeat the consumed portion of the buildings represented in our Engraving: this includes the committee and other rooms appertaining to the House of Commons, in the left of the Cut; and the House of Lords, robing and committee-rooms, and apartments of the resident officers, as far as the octagonal tower towards the south end of the building—all which are totally destroyed. The last portion burnt was the Chancellor's room, above the Peers' entrance. Only part of the Royal Gallery, (to be hereafter described,) is destroyed; and the Peers' libraries and adjoining offices, or what may be termed the southern end of the whole assemblage of buildings, is preserved. 321

## NATURAL HISTORY OF OCTOBER.

By James Fennell.

At the commencement of this month, the light, delicate tints which have latterly been observable in the foliage, undergo another change and assume a deeper hue; but as they disappear others equally light and delicate display themselves in different parts of the landscape. But these are not of long continuance. Every time the storms rage they strip the trees of all their diversified and showy clothing; for then

"the leafy deluge streams;  
Till choak'd and matted with the dreary shower,  
The forest walks, at every rising gale,  
Roll wide the wither'd waste, and whistle bleak."

Trees are not, however, divested of their leaves by the blustering storms, or even their own decay alone, as this occurrence is in a great measure owing to a cause operating internally. "It is not enough," says Mr. Rennie, "to account for the fall of the leaf, to say it falls because it is weakened or dead; for the mere death of a leaf is not sufficient to cause its fall, as when branches are struck by lightning, killed by a bleak wind, or die by any similar cause, the dead leaves adhere tenaciously to the dead branch. To produce the natural fall of the leaf, the branch must continue to live while its leaves die, and are thrown off by the action of its sap-vessels. The change of temperature from heat to cold seems to be one of the principal circumstances connected with the death and fall of the leaf. Hence it is that European trees, growing in the southern hemisphere, cast their leaves at the approach of winter there,

which is about the same period of the year that they put forth in their own climate. The native trees of the tropics are all ever-greens, and like our hollies and pines, have no general fall of the leaf, though there is always a partial fall going forward, and at the same time a renewal of the loss."

The oak is scattering its acorns which furnish at this season very acceptable food to swine and other animals. The clever author of a very amusing and instructive work, entitled the *Philosophy of Nature*, when speaking of what are termed spontaneous oaks, intimates that such are planted by the squirrel. "This little animal," he says, "has performed the most essential service to the British navy. Walking one day in the woods belonging to the Duke of Beaufort, near Troy House, in the county of Monmouth, my attention was diverted by a squirrel that sat very composedly upon the ground. \* \* \* In a few minutes the squirrel darted like lightning to the top of a tree beneath which he had been sitting. In an instant he was down with an acorn in his mouth, and began to burrow in the earth with his hands. After digging a small hole, he stooped down and deposited the acorn; then covering it, he darted up the tree again. In a moment he was down with another, which he buried in the same manner. This he continued to do as long as Colonna, [the author's assumed name,] thought proper to watch him. The industry of this little animal is directed to the purpose of securing him against want in the winter; and as it is probable that his memory is not sufficiently retentive to enable him to remember the spot in which he deposits every acorn, the industrious little fellow no doubt loses a few every year. These few spring up and are destined to supply the place of the parent tree. Thus is Britain, in some measure, indebted to the industry and bad memory of a squirrel for her pride, her glory, and her very existence." The author of the *Contemplative Philosopher* relates a similar circumstance of the crow, which, he says, plants whole rows of oaks.

There is a very pretty experiment with an acorn which it will not be irrelevant here to describe, as this is the time at which it may be performed. If an acorn be suspended by a piece of thread within half an inch of the surface of some water contained in a hyacinth glass, and so permitted to remain undisturbed, it will in a short time burst, a root will descend into the water, and a straight tapering stem will arise clothed with light green leaves. An oak thus growing on the mantel-piece of a room forms a very elegant and interesting object. For an acquaintance with this experiment we are indebted to a learned correspondent of the *Field Naturalist's Magazine*.

The elder-tree is now hung with thick clusters of berries, and

"The village dames, as they get ripe and fine,  
Gather the bunches for the elder-wine;  
Which bottled up becomes a rousing charm  
To kindle winter's icy bosom warm;  
And with its merry partner, nut-brown beer,  
Makes up the peasant's Christmas-keeping cheer."

Among the few plants that flower in October, may be mentioned the ivy, field gentian, corn-feverfew, small nettle, red-hemp nettle, Parnassian grass, pale hairy-crowfoot, ploughman's spikenard, perennial knawel, early winter-cress, and autumnal starwort.

The field gentian is said to be employed by the Swedish poor instead of hops.

On the root of the perennial knawel there is found, according to Professor Burnett, the *Coccus Polonicus*, a species of insect that yields a crimson dye.

In a state of fructification may be noticed several species of cryptogamic plants; as ferns, mosses, lichens, liver-worts, and fungi.

The fungi, commonly called mushrooms and toadstools, are of immense utility in the economy of nature, by their growing amidst corrupting matter which they imbibe and purify; and thus by their assistance is the atmosphere preserved from the nauseous effluvia with which it would otherwise be tainted. From the fungi making their appearance in places very suddenly and growing with vast rapidity, Pliny, and other ancient naturalists, supposed that they originated not from seeds, but were spontaneously produced by some mysterious transformation of the substances whereon they grew. This erroneous notion was first dispelled in the sixteenth century, by Clesius, who discovered that the fungi are produced from what is analogous to the seeds of plants; and the accuracy of this discovery has been fully confirmed by the researches of all succeeding fungologists. Many wild animals feed on fungi, and man eats, and otherwise uses, several species. In this country the field mushroom, (*agaricus campestris*), champignon, morelle, black truffle, and white truffle, are served up to table. As truffles grow some inches under the surface of the earth, it is found necessary to employ dogs to discover them, which they appear to do through the medium of their acute sense of smell. In Italy, pigs are said to be used to perform the like office.

A species of fungus of a bright red colour, and called the fly-agaric, is common in our woods, and though not used by us, yet is in great request among the Russians, and other northern people, who swallow it on account of its narcotic and inebriating qualities. It is stated that he who partakes of it "becomes as sadly comical as a Christmas clown; if he wishes to step over a straw, he takes a stride or a jump sufficient to clear the trunk of a tree; a talkative person cannot keep secrets



or silence, and one fond of music is perpetually singing; thus he flounders on from one absurdity to another, till outraged nature sinks into a stupor of unconsciousness, or, more awful, bursts into spasmodic agony: the burning stomach heaves forth the cursed potion, and it is well if the life go not with it." It is also said that this species "yields an expressed juice, which, rubbed on walls and bedsteads, destroys bugs, or mixed with milk, poisons flies." The fine dust, or powder, which is contained in the full-grown puff-balls, and other species of fungi, when mixed with a solution of gum, makes fine colours for painting.

The hedge-hog, dormouse, and field-mouse, make for themselves warm beds, and conceal stores of provision against the winter. The squirrel, also, lays up a winter stock of food, which circumstance, as has been already mentioned, is often beneficial to man's interest.

The stoat assumes its white winter-dress, in which state it is called the ermine.

The merlin, common snipe, jack-snipe, woodcock, Royston crow, redwing, and fieldfare arrive.

The merlin is a low but quick flyer, and preys on larks and other small birds, though it was formerly trained to capture partridges and quails.

The jack-snipe is of a very solitary habit, and the motive that induces it to be so is, as Mr. Knapp observes, "particularly obscure." Some writers have erroneously considered this bird as merely the male of the common snipe; but the less size of the former, the difference in its plumage, and other circumstances are sufficient to prove that it is quite a distinct species from the latter.

Woodcocks are of a very nocturnal nature, for they arrive, fly about, and feed in the night-time. Their food consists of worms, which they extract from the earth by means of their long beaks.

The redwing feeds on berries, and Pennant, speaking of its vocal powers, says it has "only a disagreeable piping note;" but Mr. Blyth, who has attentively studied the habits of birds as practised in their natural haunts, states that it has "one or two very pleasing and mellow notes."<sup>78</sup>

Fieldfares, and other migratory birds, are said to be sure prognostics of a severe winter, if they arrive unusually early and in great abundance. Unlike ourselves, the dumb portion of the creation are materially influenced in their actions by the existing state of things: hence, were we to observe their movements more closely, and to compare our observations on them with the prevailing state of the weather and the change by which it is succeeded, we might discover some

valuable data for judging of approaching meteorological transitions.

The sandpiper, redstart, (if this species be not already gone), and martin, depart. The last species quits us for Senegal; and it has been found, by marking different individuals, that on their return to this country they use the same nests, if they be not destroyed, which they occupied during their previous visit.

The skylark is heard until the middle of the month. Linnets resume their notes, but the chief songsters are the wren and the robin. The latter becomes now more familiar with mankind, singing at the porch of the cottage, and even entering it for the crumbs which the old folks and their children are ever pleased to bestow it. Indeed, wherever Mr. Robin goes, he finds a hearty welcome, abundance of food, and faithful protection; and these favours, if even he possessed not his present bold assurance, pure simplicity, and heavenly song, to recommend him, he will always receive so long as his sympathy for suffering innocence is recorded in the "Children in the Wood." This favourite nursery ballad is very fairly regarded by Pennant as "the first trial of our humanity," and he declares that "the child who refrains from tears on hearing that read, gives but a bad presage of the tenderness of its future sensations."

Starlings and linnets congregate. Gilbert White endeavouring to account for the congregating of birds, says:—"As some kind of self-interest and self-defence is, no doubt, the motive for the proceeding, may it not arise from the helplessness of their state in such rigorous seasons; as men crowd together when under great calamities, though they know not why? Perhaps approximation may dispel some degree of cold; and a crowd may make each individual appear safer from the ravages of birds of prey and other dangers."

Rooks daily revisit their old nests and make such repairs to them as they deem requisite, for the strong gales that usually blow at this time disarrange and scatter their building materials.

Snakes and toads withdraw to their winter retreats, which are commonly the holes in banks or the hollows in trees, wherein they remain in a sleep-like torpor, until awake by the return of warmer weather. Thus they imitate, on a small scale, that fictitious somnambulist Rip Van Winkle, who fell asleep on a mountain-top and woke not until he had completed a nap of one hundred years duration.

The alderman butterfly may yet be observed. During the preceding month of the present year, this species has been remarkably abundant, and in many streets of the metropolis it has been far from scarce. In

\* Magazine of Natural History. vol. vi. p. 516.

the earlier months we often see this and many other species in tolerable plenty flying about Covent Garden and other markets, where their presence is probably owing to their having been transported thither while in the larva, or chrysalis, state, along with the vegetable supplies.

The cabbage butterfly and the twenty-plume moth lay their eggs.

The gamma moth, (so called from each of its upper wings having a mark resembling the Greek letter of that name,) is still to be seen flying about at the sides of flowery banks both in the day and night-time. I have observed that in the dark the eyes of this moth possess a luminous appearance.\*

The larva of the cypress-spurge moth may be found on the plant whose name it bears. It may be known by its scanty tufts of hair, and its black, white, red, and brown streaks. "The leaves of the plant," says Mr. Rennie, "which are in the form of short, narrow blades of grass, are made choice of by the caterpillar to construct its cocoon, which it does with great neatness and regularity, the end of each leaf, after it has been detached from the plant, being fixed to the stem, and the other leaves placed parallel, as they are successively added. The other ends of all these are bent inwards, so as to form a uniformly rounded, oblong figure, somewhat larger at the one end than the other."

The water-measurer, boat-fly, and whirligig-beetle, may be seen merrily sporting, especially in sunny weather, on the surface of almost every pond, or other piece of water.

The snail-beetle appears towards the end of the month. The larva of this insect is discovered to insinuate itself into the shell of the snail and then to eat up the inhabitant.

The "shard-borne" beetles

"In the dull evening hum their heavy drone."

*Camden Town.*

\* Vide Field Naturalist, vol. ii. p. 65.

## Manners and Customs.

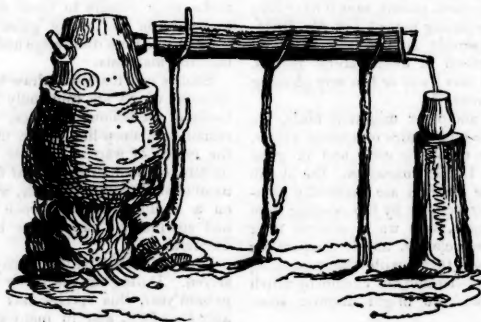
### THE SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS.

(From our Note-Book.)

THE Tahitian islanders distil an intoxicating beverage from the saccharine matter of the Ti root. Whole districts frequently unite to erect a public still. It generally consisted of a large fragment of rock, hollowed in a rough manner and fixed firmly upon a solid pile of stones, leaving a space underneath for a fireplace. The butt-end of a large tree was then hollowed out, and placed upon the rough stone boiler for a cap. The root macerated in water, and already in a state of fermentation, was then put into the hollow stone and covered with the unwieldy cap. The fire was kindled underneath. A hole was made in the wooden cap of the still, into which a long, small, bamboo cane, placed in a trough of cold water, was inserted at one end; and when the process of distillation commenced, the spirit flowed from the other into a calabash, cocoa-nut shell, or other vessel, placed underneath to receive it.

When the materials were thus prepared, the men and boys assembled to drink the ava or spirit; the first that issued from the still being the best and strongest, was handed to the priests and chiefs; that which was subsequently procured, answered very well for the people in general. This amusement lasted for several days.

The Tahitians use the drum in their religious mysteries, and also in their dances. The sacred drum, which was nearly eight feet high, was beaten sometimes at midnight when the human victim was to be offered on the following day. The peaceful idolators have been startled from their sleep by the dull, deep, portentous note; and, as its awful sounds have reverberated among the rocks of



(Tahitian Still.)





(Trumpet-shell and Drum.)

the valley, every individual through the district has been smitten with alarm and apprehension that he might be the victim marked out by the priests; for no one knew till the murderer's hand was uplifted, who was selected to propitiate the gods of his island by the surrender of his life!

A shell was the trumpet used by the priests, heralds, and by warriors at sea; the largest shells of the *murex* species were selected, and were sometimes above a foot long. A perforation was made, about an inch in diameter, near the apex of the shell, into which they inserted a bamboo cane about three feet long, which was secured and bound to the shell. The aperture was rendered air-tight by a resinous cement. These monotonous shells were blown during procession to the temple, sacrifices thereat, general restrictions, or inauguration of kings.

Their flute is a bamboo cane, about an inch in diameter and twelve or eighteen inches long. It is blown through the nostril.

Their songs are generally historical ballads, and refer to the legends or achievements of the gods, and some to the exploits of their distinguished heroes or chieftains. They were often when recited in public accompanied with gesture and action. (How forcibly this reminds us of the days of early Greece, when the songs of Homer were recited from town to town, and the drama commenced her birth among the wandering reciters who gave to their verses a kind of histrionic effect!)

These traditionary ballads were a kind of standard or classical authority, as were the Triads among the Welsh bards. J. S.

### The Public Journals.

#### WHY DON'T THE MEN PROPOSE?

Why don't the men propose, mamma?

Why don't the men propose?

Each seems just coming to the point.

And then away he goes!

It is no fault of yours, mamma,

That every body knows;

You *sête* the finest men in town.

Yet, oh! they won't propose!

I'm sure I've done my best, mamma,

To make a proper match;

For coronets and eldest sons

I'm ever on the watch:

I've hopes when some *distingué* beau

A glance upon me throws;

But though he'll dance and smile and flirt,

Alas! he won't propose!

I've tried to win by languishing,

And dressing like a blue;

I've bought big books, and talk'd of them

As if I'd read them through!

With hair crop'd like a man, I've felt

The heads of all the beaux;

But Spursheim could not touch their *hearts*,

And oh! they won't propose!

I threw aside the books, and thought

That ignorance was bliss;

I felt convinced that men preferred

A simple sort of Miss;

And so I lisp'd out naught beyond

Plain "yeses" or plain "noes,"

And wore a sweet, unmeaning smile;

Yet, oh! they won't propose!

Last night, at Lady Ramble's rout,

I heard Sir Harry Gale

Exclaim, "Now I propose again;

I started, turning pale:

I really thought my time was come,

I blush'd like any rose;

But oh! I found 'twas only at

Ecarté he'd propose!

And what is to be done, mamma!

Oh what is to be done?

I really have no time to lose,

For I am thirty-one;

At balls I am too often left

Where splusters sit in rows;

Why won't the men propose, mamma?

Why won't the men propose? T. H. B.

*New Monthly Magazine.*

#### SKETCHES ON IRISH HIGHWAYS.—THE IRISH JAUNTING CAR.

(By Mrs. S. C. Hall.)

"A BEAUTIFUL car! Won't yer honour go with Shaun Langly? Sorra such a horse from Passage to Waterford. Stand out o'

the way, ye pack of impostors! Sure it isn't such a garron as that you'd put before his honour? Look at his shandrumdandy! Whew! it hangs together by nothing at all!—it'll go to pieces the first bit of bad road that comes in its way."

This was the first specimen of genuine Irish brogue I had heard for more than sixteen years, and I felt an indescribable sensation as it fell upon my ear, while once more standing on my native soil. Our reply to the invitation was,—“We don't want a car.”

“Oh! I ax yer honour's pardon. Then it's for you the Swish car is waitin there all the mornin foreint us at the side o' the hill. Holloa! Misther Ally's man! Come down! will ye? Here's the English company. Come, step out. Holloo! holloo!”

The truth is, our friend “holloood” so loudly, that he would have been invaluable on board the steam-boat we had just quitted, as a speaking-trumpet. In answer to his summons, half tumbling, whole galloping down the hill, came the “Swiss car.”

“Is the sun too much in yer eyes, Ma'am, dear?” exclaimed a kind voice at my elbow, just as the driver was mounting. “Put up yer *numparat*, my darlint. Yer bonnet's too small, my lady: which, though an advantage to *mé*, is the contrary to *you*. It's a beautiful sun, God bless it, for the harvest;—but I'm doubtin if it's as bright over the wather as it is here. Well, glory be to God, they can't take the bames of the sun from us, any way. There, now you're not so *sinsible* of the heat! A safe and pleasant journey to yez here and hereafter! Take the baste asy, Michael, up the hill. Sure Ireland's bothered entirely wid the hills,—but the roads are as smooth as wax from this to Baanow.” And on we went.

It was found that the Swiss car could not take our luggage, so we determined to hire a machine which we heard was “wonderful strong,” and a horse that “would go to Bannow and back in less than no time.”

Now I am anxious that my experience should warn others against the evils of Irish travelling,—at least in so far as concerns the confiding of life and limb to the tender mercies of “an outside jaunting car.” Public or private, they are all execrable. Had my English readers ever the good fortune to behold one? If not, let them imagine a long box, elevated upon what are called springs; this long box forms the centre of the machine, and to confess the truth, is a convenient place for conveying luggage; at each side of the under part of this box projects a board, which forms the seats, and from these depend narrow, movable steps, upon which it was intended the feet of the travellers shall rest; the driver's seat is elevated over one end of the box, and is generally composed of crooked bars of iron, while the har-

ness, perfectly independent of oil or blacking, is twisted and patched, and tied so as to leave but little trace of what it originally was, either in formation or quality. Upon one of these atrocities was I seated, my feet hanging down upon the “step,”—if I leaned back, I bumped my head against the driver's seat; if I sat forward, I must inevitably have fallen upon what our charioteer called “*Bran new powdher pavement*,” the said *powdher pavement* consisting of a quantity of red granite broken into lumps the size of a giant's hand, and strewn thickly over the hills and hollows of a most wicked road.

Our party consisted of three. Now, on these cars you are placed *dos-a-dos*, and as three could not possibly sit on a side intended for two, I had half the vehicle to myself; the gentlemen chating of politics on the back *opposite* (to invent an Irishism) seat.

“I hope ye'r honour's comfortable?” inquired the driver, after a terrific jolt, with that familiar, yet respectful manner, which distinguishes a race now almost extinct even in primitive Ireland—the race of old servants. “I hope your honour's comfortable. I think this a dale pleasanter than them Swish cars, though I did my best to make that easy for you this morning.”

“Indeed! What did you do to it, Michael?”

“Faith, then, just put half a hundred of stunes in the bottom of it, and plenty of straw over them to keep it steady, which you'd ha' never knowd—only I'm aither telling you—these mighty fly-away cars, them *furrie* ones, are not asy and steady like these”—(another terrific jolt that would have destroyed the springs of the best made London phaeton).—Michael looked round at me, and then repeated, “I hope yer honour's comfortable!” It seemed a bitter mockery of comfort, and yet poor Michael did not mean it so. At last, we got over the “powdher pavement,” and even the gentlemen congratulated themselves on the event. When, lo and behold! we stood at the foot of what I was told was a “*little hill*,” the poor horse eyed it with strong symptoms of dislike.

“It's a fine mornin,” said Mike, pulling the horse to a dead stop.

“So it is,” said I.

“Gentlemin, there's a beautiful view from this hill,” persisted our driver, “and the sweetest of fresh air, and to walk it up would do ye a dale of good. You might travel long enough in England widout comin' across such a prospect.”

“Shall I walk also, Michael?”

“Oh, sorra a step! Sure Nimble (that's the baste's name) will go a dale the better from havin' a lady to carry. Gee up, my man! Cushla machres was every inch of ye. Nimble, my darlint! it's yerself that was the beauty—onct!”

"It is a long time ago, then," replied I, looking with compassion upon the poor, long-boned animal.

"Indeed you may say that, lady dear. You see he's kilt entirely with the hard work; and the poor appetite, though that last is lucky, for it's little the man that owns him has to give him to eat."

"How is that, Michael?"

"Faith, it's myself can't tell you, my lady, only *sorrow has long legs*; and his landlord's as hard as the devil's forehead"—(another jolt, I thought the car was broken to atoms.)

"Michael, what is the matter?"

"Troth, Ma'am, we're done for! I wish I hadn't sent the gentlemin on; but you wouldn't have a knife, or a piece of ould leather, or a taste of rope in yer pocket—asy, Nimble—bad luck to ye, will ye stand asy? Small blame to the baste to want to get on; there's a black cloud comin' over Knock-naughtdowly will soak every tack on our backs in five minutes, and sorra a house nearer than Kilborrithane. Come here do, you little gossoon; run afther thim gentlemin, and call thim back; and harkee! give me that piece of string that's round yer hat. Now run, run for the dear life. Och, faith, we're in for it; this harness 'ill never reach Bannow; an' deed an' deed poor Nimble seems uneasy."

"Was he in harness to-day, before?"

"He was."—"Did he go far?"—"Not to say far, only three mile. I mean three goin' and three comin'."—"Had he a heavy load?"

"Faith, he had. Mrs. Graham and seven of her children, and two nurses, and the bathin' woman, goin' and comin' to the salt wather, to say nothing of the fish and stones and things they brings home afther bathin'."

"I think," I replied, jumping off the car, "that I will walk on to the next village, and send you some assistance; it is evident the horse can never achieve the hill."

"God bless you, Ma'am, dear, isn't he like ourselves, *used to all manner of slavery*? I ax yer pardon! but if yer ladyship would lend me a loan of the string of your cloak, it would mend this little fray in the harness, and the never a bit of harm would I do it."

To Michael's great astonishment, I did not feel disposed to part with what he so irreverently termed the *string* of my cloak, but climbed up the hill until I overtook my companions. One of them a native of the soil, only laughed at my dilemma; he was accustomed to such adventures; and said that, within less than a quarter of a mile he would procure a capital horse from a Mr. Matty Byrne; and the poor animal who had been previously worn out in the service of Mrs. Graham and her countless children, might fare as he best could by the roadside till the jaunting car returned.

We posted on as fast as possible to Master Byrne's, and found his residence in good time, that is, just before the pelting of the pitiless storm commenced.

"Had he a horse?" "To be sure he had—three—beauties! Would flog the country to produce three such!" "Would he lend it?" "To Mr. Alley troth he would, and the veins of his heart with it, to one of the name;" and immediately he hallooed to a strapping youth, who popped up his head from out a potato pit, and commanded him forthwith to bring "Spanker" from the plough.

The shower was over; "the valley lay smiling before us." Michael and the car had arrived; the luggage, which was piled up in what they called—just then very appropriately—the *well*, soaked through. Spanker, a bright bay, bony horse, with an exceedingly quick eye, stood meek and quiet enough at the door. I resumed my seat, and looked on the beautiful prospect, which, as the road was tolerably good, I was enabled to enjoy.

"Master Byrne," I inquired, "is your landlord resident here?"

"No, *thank God*, Ma'am!"

"Indeed: who is your agent then?"

"A born gentleman—God's fresh blessing be about him! As long as he is over us, we'll make a free present of the landlord to the English; and much good may he do them!"

At this moment, Spanker made a dead stop opposite the door of a small public-house.

"Make the horse go on," said our friend in a cold, determined tone. Byrne looked round at him precisely with the expression of a dog when disappointed of a long-expected bone. "He has a *laning* this way," he replied. "I fear, Byrne, you go there more than once a-week."—"Sometimes I do, my lady."—"Every day, Byrne?"—"Not always, Ma'am, dear."—"Twice a-day, Byrne?"—"Faith, Ma'am, if I do it's Spanker's fault, and not mine. When I gets on his back, thinking a trifle of exercise would do me good, as sure as fate he makes for the public—and no mistake."

"Believe me, it is a ruinous habit."

"No dispatin' it, my lady; but ruin has followed ould Ireland so long, that it would be heart-breakin' to part company now." We were at the commencement of another hill. "I must trouble ye all to get off," said Byrne. "It would take more wit than would reach from this to Cape Clear to make Spanker go either up or down a hill with any body behind him."

We submitted to necessity, and walked.

"You may get on the car now, Ma'am, dear.—Spanker, stand still, will ye?—Up

wid yez now, while he's picking Jimmy Rape's barley through that hole in the hedge, for if he knowd you were getting up, all the saints in the calendar wouldn't hold him."

#### THE POOR SCHOLAR'S LAMENT.

DEATH,—old fellow! have we, then,  
Come at last so near each other?  
Well, shake hands, and be to me  
A quiet friend, a faithful brother.  
All those merry days are gone,—  
Gone with cash and health, old fellow;  
When I read long days and nights,  
(Save, now and then, when I got mellow.)  
Newton! Euclid! fine old ghosts!  
Fine wast thou too, classic learning,—  
Though thou left'st huge aches behind,  
Head, and heart, and temples burning.  
How I toiled! I wore my brain,  
Wasting o'er the midnight taper,  
Dreaming—dreaming!—till one day  
I woke, and found my life—a vapour!  
Once I hoped (ah, laugh not yet!)  
For wealth, and health, and fame—the bubble!  
So I toiled up Wisdom's steeps,  
And got a fall, boy, for my trouble!  
Now all's over! no one came—  
Not one cheered my strong endeavour;  
So I sank, and called on thee:  
Come, boy, let's be friends for ever!  
Ere we go, let's curse this den,  
Where worth ne'er was yet befriended:  
I'll cry "Curse!" and thou "Amen!"  
Soh,—I'm blind; our chant is ended.—C. L.  
*New Monthly Magazine.*

#### Spirit of Discovery.

##### CAPTAIN BACK'S EXPEDITION.

LETTERS from Captain Back have been received at the office of the Royal Geographical Society, the latest date being the 29th of April last, when the intelligence had just reached him of Captain Ross's return. Their contents are of a mixed character; and their epitome has been forwarded to the newspapers, by Captain Maconnochie.

Captain Back and his party were all well, with the exception of Augustus, the Esquimaux interpreter, who had accompanied Sir John Franklin in both his journeys, and was now dispatched by the Hudson's Bay Company to join this third enterprise, but perished by the way. The winter, had, indeed, been extraordinarily severe. "We have had," says Captain Back, "a most distressing winter in this more than Siberian solitude, where desolation reigns in unbroken repose. Even the animals have fled from us, as it were by instinct, and many, very many, of the unhappy natives, have fallen victims to famine, in situations the most revolting to human nature. The fish, also, on which I in some measure relied, left us; in places which we were told never before failed, we have not caught a fish; and during the whole season scarcely a living creature has been seen, except, on one occasion, a raven, which, in wheeling over the house, startled me with his croak, so uni-

form was the silence around us. I ran out; but when it saw me it screamed, and again made off to the western mountains, in the dark shade of which it was speedily lost. My party has been thus much dispersed in quest of food; and every messenger has brought me tidings of their encountering severe privations. Mr. McLeod (an agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, attached to the party), and his family, are at this moment somewhere on the lake, fishing; and you may imagine what it costs me to see them also exposed to the rigours of this severest of all winters; for the mean of three thermometers has been far below the lowest we ever sustained in our former expeditions. After this narrative, you may believe that, in spite of all my care and economy, some part of the provision laid up for our voyage has been necessarily consumed. The most experienced man in the country could not have foreseen this; nor was there any possibility of avoiding it. My anxiety is immeasurable on account of it; but I still hope that the Indians may be enabled to procure us dry food, or, in short, something that may afford sustenance, so that the fondest wishes of my heart may not be frustrated. Of that, however, in one sense, there is no danger; for, come the worst, I can always reduce my men, and go in our boat. Do not, therefore, let this affect you, for I feel confident of overcoming it. Another misfortune is, that, pinched as we are for provisions, we must drag our boats and luggage almost 100 miles over rock and ice, before we can reach open water. This we have ascertained through the winter; but never mind, this also shall be done, and it will be a new feature in discovery. In our former expeditions we had none of these tremendous obstructions to contend with, though we had to take our bark canoes some distance on sledges. But I have perfect confidence in my men; and they, good fellows, think I cannot err," &c.

The above was written before the arrival of the express announcing Captain Ross's return; and, pressed for time, only a few lines are added subsequent to that event. They are, however, so characteristic of the gallant writer, that they ought not to be omitted:—

"April 25, 1834.

"I have this moment received your dispatch, with an account of Ross's return. I am all gratitude and happiness. My heart is too full to write; but I shall pay attention to all that is recommended to me; of this assure the committee. What a triumph is this return of Ross's to us all, who 'hoped against hope.' And what do the croakers say? Will they acknowledge the lesson afforded by it of the power of stubborn perseverance?" &c.

From a private letter, it may be interesting to some to add also the following scrap:—

"My day is chiefly spent thus:—Before

breakfast I read a portion of Scripture, and afterwards attend to my observations, study, draw (I have plenty of pencil sketches), work up my survey, take notes, &c. At the same time, I keep my eye on whatever duty is going on; have our evening school twice a week, and read the service in French and English every Sunday."—"My guitar is cracked, and jars abominably; but you will not be surprised at this, when I add that I have been obliged to grease my hands daily to prevent their cracking also; for such is the dryness of the atmosphere, that nothing can stand it," &c.

It may also allay the anxiety of friends and relations to add, that Hearne found abundance of game along the banks of the Clew-ee-cho, so that, as the season advances, Captain Back's hunters may reasonably be expected to be equally fortunate. His prudence, based on a long experience, may also be relied on, as well as his enterprise. His buoyancy of temper, and the confidence reposed in him by his companions, will support all their spirits. In a word, his task is arduous—more arduous than had been imagined previous to the receipt of these letters; but it could not be in better hands. And it is very satisfactory to know, from other letters received by the committee of the Hudson's Bay Company, that ample supplies have been since forwarded to him, which will support him through the winter. Early next spring, he and his whole party will set forward on their return.

To these interesting particulars may advantageously be added the following, from the *Literary Gazette*:—

"The letter to Captain Macconochie of the 29th of April is, it should have been mentioned, from Fort Reliance.\* Captain Back's winter quarters, at the east end of Great Slave Lake (see the complete analysis of his journey thither in the *Lit. Gaz.* No. 909, June 21st). Letters to Commander James Ross, and to branches of his own family, are of five days later date, viz. May 4th; and in about a month (early in June) our gallant countryman expected to proceed on his course.

"While we read with strong sympathy the description of the privations to which the party had been exposed, and the necessity of breaking upon their summer provision, it is consolatory to reflect that it was written before Captain Back was aware of the return of Captain Ross—a very important event, as it not only limits the objects the writer had in view, but narrows the extent of his prospective labours. He has not now to seek the more distant wreck of the *Fury*, but will confine himself to the geographical interests of the expedition. Fort Reliance is about 200 miles from Commander Ross's obelisk, to which

Back would direct his toilsome and difficult march over the long and wild region his letter notices. But the absolute length of his route will depend on the water communication between, and the point where he reaches the sea coast. Where the river Thlew-ee-cho-dezeth terminates is quite a riddle—what "Back's River" may be is as much unknown—and all that is probable is that the travellers will come upon the shore somewhere between the Cape Turnagain of Franklin and Ross's obelisk. Having made the latter, they will have to retrace the coast to Cape Turnagain, and thus finish all that is wanting on the line of the North Continent of America between the meridian 100° and 110°.

"It is also gratifying to learn, by the Hudson Bay despatches, that when they return to their winter quarters they will find replenished stores of pemmican sufficient for all their need; while in the preceding summer months they will be partially supplied with game.

"Thus, though our enterprising voyagers have enough of fatigue and difficulty to encounter, we have every thing to hope for them and from their continued exertions. Next year, please God, we trust to welcome them in safety and health"

The *Athenæum* adds a copy of Back's warm-hearted letter to Commander Ross, observing—"How strangely has the wheel of fortune turned round! Back left us, aided by public sympathy, in the hope of extricating Ross and his gallant crew from their perilous situation, or ascertaining what had been their melancholy fate; and now the Rosses are at home with us, reading of the privations and difficulties with which Back and his handful of followers are contending."

"Fort Reliance, May 3rd, 1834.

"My dear Ross,—Accept the warmest congratulations of my heart at your safe and happy return to your country and friends. Those friends will inform you of the interest we all took in your fate; and though some slight apathy was evinced by a few, yet the ready cheerfulness of the many to assist us in promoting this expedition, must ever be a source of the greatest gratification to your uncle and yourself. For my part, my purpose is answered; and, were it not that the public has a right to my services, in attempting to perform what remains to be done on this coast, this year should have seen me also among you. What hardships you must have suffered,—how gallantly maintained,—and how providentially have you been preserved at last! That good-hearted person, your brother, was the last with whom I shook hands at Liverpool; and I have a letter from him for you. Nor must I forget to mention the exertions of our friend, Bromley, whose feeling for you was little less than a relation's. It was he who first called on me after my return from Italy, and informed me of Dr.

\* Lat. 62 deg. 48 min. 15 sec. north; and long. 109 deg. 10 min. west.

Richardson's failure with government, as well as of your father's anxieties on the subject. But all these things we will talk over when we meet. In the mean time, convey my kindest regards to your uncle and your family; and, with 'one cheer more' for your safety, believe me,

"My dear Ross,

"Your sincere friend,

"GEO. BACK."

#### CHINESE INVENTIONS.

It appears, from the recent communication of a correspondent at Canton, to the *Morning Herald*, that the Chinese have been, for the last quarter of a century, *unjustly low rated*; which the writer attributes to the little intercourse of Europe with China, except through England, and that through persons whose interests have been served by keeping up delusion on both sides. A few minor agricultural implements and contrivances to supply the cravings of the luxurious rich, may serve to exemplify this mistake. For all practical purposes, of colours, or tests of metals, the Chinese are equal to the manufacturers of London or Paris. The Persian wheel waters and fertilizes whole districts. Dempster's scheme for preserving fish in ice, (adopted in Scotland in 1800,) feeds the alderman about lat. 28° N., from the snow of the steppes, with delicious north country fish; and has existed for centuries. Wheels driven by crews, keep in life and freshness by a stream of water thousands of fish brought into boats by the Canton market daily, in lat. 21° N. The Chinese bricklayers have, from time immemorial, used for chopping rice-straw to mix with lime, the very implement which has been patented in Britain within these ten years. The French have been peculiarly successful in preserving provisions by exclusion of air; but the Chinese had preceded them for centuries in their simple and effectual methods of keeping eggs, fish, and vegetables. China is the original country of silk in its greatest beauty; and it is only mentioned to relate an amiable sort of barbarity left, approaching to the hot-beds of Potsdam or Sevres, not so generally known. At Nankin, the Emperor has a silk-manufactory worked by his own servants; their fabrics are finer than those of any other looms in China; none of the articles are sold, as they are made exclusively for the Imperial family, or sent as presents to the Emperor's high servants over the empire. The Imperial manufacturers are said to have the privilege of taking, (previous to their exposure to sale,) the picked lots of silk in the district, and of selecting from a private loom any very ingenious weaver. Sugar is of early origin, and perhaps more is used in, and exported from, China than all the rest of the world put together; and if their sugar-candy be taken into account, it does not

yield to our highest refined sugar. The teas require not a word of encomium: it will be very long before the *sloe-leaf* gatherers on the hills of Brazil, can rival them either in cheapness or quality.

#### Anecdote Gallery.

##### POPE'S EARLY DAYS.

MR. POPE's first education was under a priest, and I think his name was Banister. He set out with the design of teaching him Latin and Greek together.—"I was then about eight years old, had learnt to read of an old aunt, and to write by copying printed books.—After having been under that priest about a year, I was sent to the seminary at Twiford, and then to a school by Hyde Park Corner: and with the two latter masters lost what I had gained under the first. About twelve years old, I went with my father into the Forest, and there learned for a few months, under a fourth priest. This was all the teaching I ever had, and, God knows, it extended a very little way.

"When I had done with my priests, I took to reading by myself, for which I had a very great eagerness and enthusiasm, especially for poetry: and in a few years I had dipped into a great number of the English, French, Italian, Latin, and Greek poets. This I did without any design, but that of pleasing myself: and got the languages, by hunting after the stories in the several poets I read; rather than read the books to get the languages. I followed every where as my fancy led me, and was like a boy gathering flowers in the fields and woods, just as they fall in his way. These five or six years I still look upon as the happiest part of my life.

"In these rambles of mine through the poets, when I met with a passage, or story, that pleased me more than ordinary, I used to endeavour to imitate it, or translate it into English; and this gave rise to my *Imitations* published so long after. [He named among other books he then read, the *Criticisms* of Rapin and Bossu; and these might be what led him to write his essay on criticism. He used to mention Quintilian, too, as an old favourite author with him.—*Spence.*]

"It was while I lived in the Forest, that I got so well acquainted with Sir William Trumbull, who loved very much to read and talk of the classics in his retirement. We used to take a ride out together, three or four days in the week, and at last, almost every day.—Another of my earliest acquaintance was Walsh. I was with him at his seat in Worcestershire, for a good part of the summer of 1705, and showed him my essay on criticism in 1706. Walsh died the year after.—I was early acquainted with Lord Lansdown,

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Garth, Betterton, and Wychenley, and, not long after, with St. John."—*Spence's Anecdotes*.

#### WILL'S COFFER-HOUSE.

This house was kept by William Urwin, and was situated on the north side of Russell-street, at the end of Bow-street; subsequently occupied by a perfumer, and numbered 23. Here Dryden had his armed chair, which in winter had a settled and prescriptive place by the fire, was in the summer placed in the balcony; and he called the two places his winter and his summer seat. The appeal was made to him upon any literary dispute. The company assembled on the first or dining room floor, as it was called in the last century, and hence we hear of a balcony. The company did not sit in boxes, as at present, but at various tables which were dispersed through the room. Smoking was permitted in the public room, it was then so much in vogue that it does not seem to have been considered a nuisance. Here, as in other similar places of meeting, the visitors divided themselves into parties; and we are told by Ward, that the young beaux and wits, who seldom approached the principal table, thought it a great honour to have a pinch out of Dryden's snuff-box. Will's continued to be the resort of the wits at least till 1710.—*Ibid.*

#### The Gatherer.

*The March.*—At the Cape of Good Hope, the colonists are emigrating northward and eastward, beyond the limits of the colony, to form new settlements. The Hottentots are progressing in civilization and religion. A printing press has been added to the missionary institution at Genadendal, and an organ has been built in the Hottentot church there. At Kat River, many intelligent Hottentots are compositors and pressmen.

In the spring of the year, the Chinese celebrate the Tsing-ming rites, by ascending the hills to pray at the tombs of their relations: which act they call Pae-tsing, or the worship of the first green of the young spring.

In some parts of China, it is customary for the lady to become the suitor: she marries the man, not the man her. On these occasions, the expenses of the marriage festival are defrayed by the bride.

*Origin of the Penny Post-Office.*—An office unknown in other countries was projected by Mr. David Murray, an upholder in Paternoster-row, in the year 1683, who, by this admirable and useful project, deserves to be considered as a benefactor to the City, and to have his name transmitted down to posterity. He communicated the scheme to

Mr. William Dockwra, who carried it on for some time with great success, till the Government laid claim to it as a royal prerogative. Dockwra was obliged to submit, and in return had a pension of 200*l.* per annum, allowed him by the King during his life.

P. T. W.

*Short-sightedness.*—The following instance of this failing, contrasts well with the present state of our Australian colonies, and the constant communication which is going forward between them and the mother country. It is taken from the *Gentleman's Magazine* for September, 1786, vol. lvi. p. 806, 807:—"It has been seen in the public prints, that a plan for forming a settlement at Botany Bay, for the restriction of felons sentenced for transportation, is actually to be carried into execution; but the plan is so wild and extravagant, that we can hardly believe it could be countenanced by any professional man, after a moment's reflection. Not the distance only, but the almost impracticability of crossing the line with a number of male and female felons, who, in their cleanliest state, and as much at large as can with safety be allowed them in gaol, and with frost, scarcely to be kept from putrid disorders, must for ever render such a plan abortive. The rains, tornados, and heats that accompany these tempests, near and under the line, are often fatal to the hardiest navigator; besides the mountainous seas that are almost always to be encountered in passing the Cape, and in the latitudes in which the transports must pursue their course to Botany Bay, no man surely who had a life to lose, or a relative or friend that he wished ever again to see, would engage in so hazardous an undertaking. We may, therefore, venture to foretell, that, if any such desperado should be found, his fate, like that of Lunarde's late expedition, will for ever deter a second repetition. It is notorious, that the Dutch East India ships lose more than half the recruits they take on board for their settlements in India, in crossing the line, and before they reach the place for which they are bound. Yet this course to India is not near so dangerous as the course to Botany Bay. Add to these objections, that the natives are the most savage and ferocious of any that Captain Cook met with in exploring the eastern coast of New Holland."

*Hiring a Coachman.*—I had a master once who had two beautiful English horses, and he wanted a careful man to drive them; he was a mighty pleasant gentleman—the sort of master would knock a man down for the least thing in the world—and so good-hearted when the passion was over. Well, there was as many as fifteen after the place, and the first that went up to him, "Well, my man," says he, "how near the edge of a precipice

would you undertake to drive my carriage?" So the boy considered, and he says, says he, "Within a foot, plaze yer honour, and no harm."—"Very well," says he, "go down, and I'll give ye yer answer by-and-by." So the next came up, and said he'd be bound to carry 'em within half a foot; and the next said six inches; and another, a dandyfied chap intirely, was so mighty nice, that he would drive it within "three inches and a half, he'd go bail." Well, at last my turn came, and when his honour asked me how nigh I would drive his carriage to a precipice, I said, says I, "Plaze yer honour, I'd keep as far off it as I could."—"Very well, Mистер Byrne," says he, "you're my coachman," says he. Och, the roar there was in the kitchen, whin I wint down and tould the joke! Well, I was there better nor two years, and at the end I lost it through a little mistake. I was drowsy one night coming home, and faith the horses had a spite to me, on account of my counthry, and they took a wrong turn, and stuck fast in a gap; and sure it's rewarded I ought to have been instead of punished, for sorra a one but myself would ever have got the horses and carriage out of the gap without a scratch or a brack upon them; but there's no justice in the world!"—*New Monthly Magazine*.

**Cloth Trade.**—The Mixed Cloth Hall at Leeds contains 1,800 stands of twenty-two inches each in front, which are the property of 1,780 manufacturers, twenty holding two stands each. The markets are held every Tuesday and Saturday for one hour and a quarter on each day; no one sells before or after the ringing of a bell, under a penalty; and the whole of the cloth is sold in a rough state.

**Futurity.**—Our flattering ourselves here with the thoughts of enjoying the company of our friends when in the other world; may be but too like the Indians thinking, that they shall have their dogs and their horses there.—*Pope*.

**Pope's Homer.**—The MS. of the Iliad descended from Lord Bolingbroke to Mallet, and is now to be found in the British Museum, where it was deposited at the pressing instance of Dr. Maty. Mr. D'Israeli, in the first edition of his *Curiosities of Literature*, has exhibited a fac-simile of one of the pages. It is written upon the backs and covers of letters and other fragments of papers, evincing that it was not without reason he was called Paper-sparing Pope.

**Happiness.**—The happiness of life is so nice a thing, that, like the sensitive plant, it shrinks away even upon thinking of it.—*Spence*.

**Pronunciation.**—Lord Granville had long wanted to pass an evening with Mr. Pope: when he at last did so, Mr. Pope said that

the two hours were wholly taken up by his lordship, in debating and settling how the first verse in the *Æneid* was to be pronounced: and whether we should say Cicero or Kikero! This is what is meant in the two lines inserted in the *Dunciad*, on those learned topics.—*Dr. Warburton*.

**Maxims.**—It is vanity which makes the rake at twenty, the worldly man at forty, and the retired man at sixty.—We are apt to think that best in general, for which we find ourselves best fitted in particular.—Every body finds that best and most commendable that he is driving, whilst he is driving it: and does not then suspect what he chooses afterwards, to be half so good.—If a man saw all at first, it would damp his manner of acting: he would not enjoy himself so much in his youth, nor bustle so much in his manhood.—It is best for us to be short-sighted, in the different stages of our life, just in the same manner as it is best for us in this world not to know how it is to be with us in the next.—*Pope*.

"*Morland's pictures*," says Cunningham, "were mostly produced under the influence of intoxication, and the strong stimulant of immediate payment; they were painted in the terror of want, and in the presence of the sordid purchaser, who risked five guineas in a venture for twenty; yet they want nothing which art can bestow, or the most fastidious eye desire. Such was the precious coin which this unfortunate man paid for gin, obtained the company of the scum and feculence of society, and purchased patience from his creditor, or peace from the tipstaff. The annals of genius record not a more deplorable story than *Morland's*."\*

\* *Lives of British Painters*, vol. ii. p. 241.

•• Answers to Correspondents in the Part now publishing.

#### BURNING OF THE HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT.

It is our intention to devote a portion of about Six Numbers of the *MIRROR* to the details of the above memorable Event, more especially in illustration of the antiquities of the House of Lords and the House of Commons, and their interesting localities.

No. 687 contains an Engraving of the House of Commons, and the Speaker's Residence; with notices of the ancient Palace, and the early history of St. Stephen's Chapel.

No. 688 (the present,) contains an Engraving of the west front of the Houses of Parliament, and an Outline of the recent Conflagration.

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Printed and published by J. LIMBIRD, 143, Strand, (near Somerset House,) London; sold by G. G. BENNIS, 55, Rue Neuve St. Augustin, Paris; CHARLES JUGEL, Frankfurt; and by all News-men and Booksellers.